

SAFETY TIPS DURING OUTAGES AND BLACKOUTS

#	ISSUE	SAFETY TIPS
1.	LIGHTING	All lights will go out except the emergency lighting system. This along with lighting from the windows should provide enough light to exit the building safely if necessary. At night, the emergency lighting system will allow safe exiting of the building. Aisles, exits and entrances are to be kept clear and unobstructed to avoid tripping and falling. Building response team personnel on each floor should have flashlights available in case they are needed. DO NOT use candles for illumination; these are fire hazards. Use battery flashlights instead. Employees should keep a flashlight in their workspace and in their vehicle.
2.	ELEVATORS	Avoid using elevators. Take the stairs instead. Generally, buildings higher than four floors have at least one elevator powered by an emergency generator, so it would be available in a power outage. Elevators that are not on emergency power would typically stop where they are when the power goes out. Passengers in elevators during a power outage should follow procedures posted in the elevator; emergency phones may be used to call for help. Do not climb out!
3.	PARKING STRUCTURES	State agencies/departments and employees should verify with their parking provider how to enter and exit parking lots and garages during a blackout. Most parking facilities will not have emergency power. There are emergency exit lights to direct people to pedestrian exits. Employees should travel to parking structures in pairs.
4.	COMMUNICATIONS	Phone systems may not function, depending on how the system is set up in the building and whether or not the outage is widespread. Agencies/departments should verify with their phone service provider how their phone system works during a power outage.
5.	VENTILATION	In a power outage, heating, ventilating, and air conditioning systems will shut down, and return when power is restored. Some computer rooms receive power from special equipment and backup generators; they will come back on when the generator starts. A lack of ventilation for the amount of time the power may be out should not pose a health or safety concern. Employees should keep a coat or sweater at their desks.

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6.	SECURITY	Electronic locks will generally fail in the locked condition for entrances. Exiting from the building is always available. Cameras and alarm systems typically have battery backup and should continue to function.
7.	ACCESS	Automatic door openers may not function in all facilities during a blackout.
8.	FIRE ALARM SYSTEMS	These functions will not be interrupted, as these systems have battery backup and are on the emergency generator circuit, if there is one.
9.	EMERGENCY GENERATOR	Generally, larger facilities have emergency generators for critical building support systems such as emergency lighting, elevators, fire sprinkler pumps, and fire-life safety systems. These generators will start automatically within moments of a power loss and assume the emergency loads. Typically, there is enough fuel for these systems to operate for at least eight hours.
10.	PLUMBING	Buildings with multiple floors have booster pumps on the city water system that may not function in a power outage. This would cause a loss of water pressure on upper floors. In such situations, employees and other building occupants are cautioned to limit use of the restrooms during a power outage.
11.	TRAVEL	Avoid unnecessary travel. Remember that traffic signals may go out of service, resulting in traffic jams and unusually hazardous situations.
12.	LEAVING THE WORKPLACE	Do not leave the workplace without appropriate authorization from your supervisor. Follow the steps of your Emergency Response Plan. Although loss of electrical service may compromise state operations, it is expected that some functions can be continued, and personnel efforts should be directed towards these.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS: OUTAGES AND BLACKOUTS

#	ISSUE	SAFETY TIPS
1.	LOCATION OF EMPLOYEES	Each department or tenant should assess where employees should relocate, or whether employees should stay put, if a blackout occurs. Generally, areas with the most natural light are best. It is State policy that employees remain at work to ensure their safety. If the building is experiencing a power outage, it is likely that the immediate area around the building has also; relocating to areas outside of the building could be less desirable. Remember that rolling blackouts are intended to be temporary situations, lasting roughly 1 hour and fifteen minutes.
2.	ACCESSIBILITY	Plan for accommodating employees who have limited mobility to ensure they will be able to safely move about or exit the building in the event of a blackout. This may include allowing them to leave early to avoid the risk associated with exiting the facility during a blackout, or relocating their workspace to an area where such risk can be avoided.
3.	BACKUP GENERATION	Building Manager or BSO shall ensure that any backup generator sources (e.g., UPS, electrical emergency generators) are tested and readily available to power critical life-safety functions of the building. In the case of battery-operated devices, batteries should be checked and fully charged; in the case of diesel generators, tanks should be topped off and testing scheduled. Back-up radios should also be tested.
4.	ELECTRICAL OUTAGE CONTACT LISTS	The Building Manager/BSO/Facility Manager and Agency Secretaries/ Department Directors should ensure that their phone trees are current and that a complete and continuously updated list of emergency contacts and people who regularly work after normal business hours is distributed, as appropriate.
5.	BUILDING SECURITY	Each agency and department needs to ensure the local number of the appropriate law enforcement agency is readily available to staff, to assist, if necessary, during a rotating outage and when power is restored or to report on conditions and the safety of employees. Security plans should also include provisions for the safety of employees who are responsible for handling cash in public areas, as well as plans for securing the cash.
6.	ELECTRICAL OUTAGE SUPPLIES	Supply areas should be fully stocked and the room locations published and accessible to staffs who require access. Recommended supplies include flashlights, battery powered radios, extra batteries, warm blankets, and some drinking water. If these supplies currently are stocked, their expiration dates should be checked.
7.	24-7 OPERATIONS	Special considerations may be required for State operations that run 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Building Managers and BSOs should ensure that this notice goes to all tenants and staff.